

OSHA FactSheet

OSHA Requirements When a Worker Experiences a Job-Related Injury or Illness

Over the past three decades, occupational injuries and illnesses in the U.S. have declined by 42 percent, even though employment has more than doubled. Nevertheless, every year, nearly five million workers experience an occupational injury or illness on the job. More than half of these injuries and illnesses are severe enough to cause the worker to spend time away from work.

OSHA, along with safety and health professionals around the Nation, is working with employers and employees to move toward zero injuries and illnesses in U.S. workplaces. And the agency will not be satisfied until every worker in America goes home safe and sound each day.

Reporting Catastrophes

When a worker is killed on the job and/or three or more workers are hospitalized, all employers covered by OSHA must report to the agency within eight hours. Fatal heart attacks also must be reported. Employers can call the nearest OSHA area office or the agency's toll-free number 800-321-OSHA (6742) to provide this information.

Providing First Aid

Employers who are not within three to four minutes of a hospital or clinic must be prepared to provide first aid to workers who experience injuries or illnesses on the job. OSHA requires that adequate first aid supplies must be readily available and that someone must be adequately trained to render first aid.

The agency also encourages employers to consider acquiring automated external defibrillators (AEDs)—medical devices designed to revive victims of sudden cardiac arrest. These devices analyze a victim's heart rhythm and deliver an electric shock to restore heart rhythm to normal. Battery-operated AEDs are compact, lightweight, portable, safe and easy to use. Having them onsite can save precious time and improve survival odds because they can be used before emergency medical service personnel arrive.

Recording Injuries and Illnesses

Most employers in high hazard industries are required to keep records of injuries and illnesses experienced by their employees. An annual summary of these injuries and illnesses must be posted in the workplace from February 1 to April 30. Details on recordkeeping requirements and forms are available from OSHA's website at www.osha.gov. The website also offers training to help employers complete the forms.

Those with 10 or fewer employees are exempt from injury and illness recordkeeping requirements except when selected by OSHA or the Bureau of Labor Statistics to participate in a mandatory data collection.

Investigating Accidents

One of the hallmarks of an effective safety and health management system is a commitment to investigate every incident that results in a worker injury or illness—and near-misses as well. By immediately following up, employers can identify root causes and take corrective steps to prevent future problems.

Getting Help with Safety and Health Management Systems

When it comes to injuries and illnesses, the best defense is a good offense—a pro-active safety

and health management system that focuses on finding and fixing hazards before they can lead to problems. OSHA offers various services—such as consultation and compliance assistance programs—to help employers establish safety and health management systems.

OSHA's Consultation Program, for example, is a free service to help smaller employers identify and fix hazards in their workplaces. OSHA also has compliance assistance specialists available in each area office to help employers and employees comply with OSHA requirements. OSHA cooperative and partnership programs often offer assistance with establishing safety and health manage-

ment systems. Other sources of help include trade associations, insurance companies and private consultants.

OSHA's Safety and Health Management eTool—interactive software on OSHA's website—helps users build their own safety system based on a series of questions and the specific responses a user provides. Employers and employees also may consult OSHA's Handbook for Small Businesses and "Safety and Health Program Management Guidelines," Federal Register 54:3904-3916, January 26, 1989. All these resources are available at www.osha.gov.

This is one in a series of informational fact sheets highlighting OSHA programs, policies or standards. It does not impose any new compliance requirements. For a comprehensive list of compliance requirements of OSHA standards or regulations, refer to Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations. This information will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. The voice phone is (202) 693-1999; teletypewriter (TTY) number: (877) 889-5627.

